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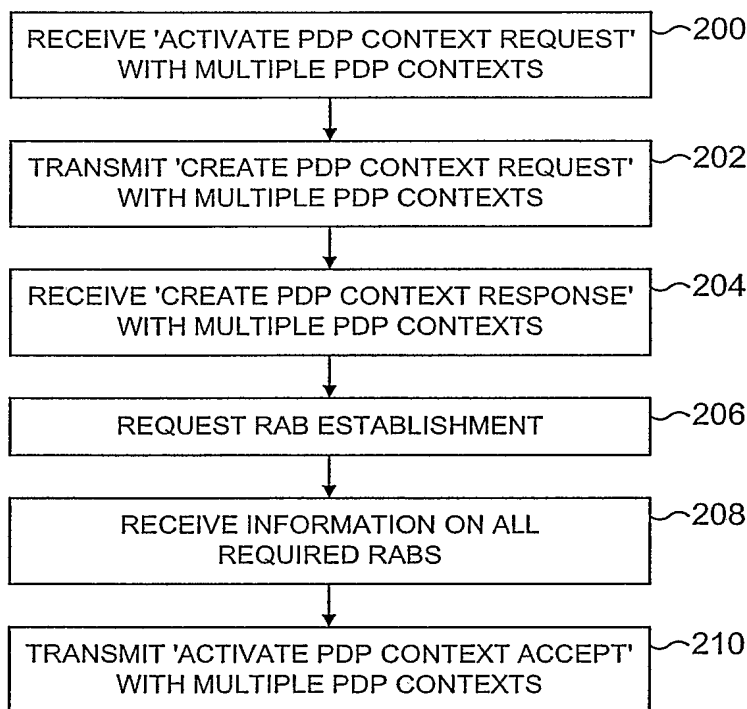
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(54) Title: CONNECTION ESTABLISHMENT FOR PDP CONTEXTS



(57) Abstract: There is disclosed a method and apparatus for establishing multiple PDP contexts in a mobile communication system. The method comprises determining the required. Preferably this step is performed by the method comprises receiving all the required PDP requests This step is preferably performed in the i.e. in the SGSN and/or the GGSN. The method establishing radio access resources for all the PDP context requests. This step is preferably initiated by the SGSN, and the RNC then preferably allocates the radio access resources based on SGSN requests.

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CONNECTION ESTABLISHMENT FOR PDP CONTEXTSFIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the establishment of connections between a user equipment and a communication network, and particularly but not exclusively to the establishment of PDP contexts.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

An application session, e.g. an IP (Internet protocol) multimedia session may consist of multiple media components, for example video, voice and data. In the communication network specified by 3GPP, each media component may require a PDP context of its own. This requires a user equipment (UE) to activate multiple PDP contexts for an application session consisting of multiple media components.

There has been a suggestion in the art that there should be provided the flexibility to allow multiplexing of multiple media components onto a single PDP context. Such multiplexing would theoretically allow a single PDP context for all media components which have similar requirements for the PDP context, e.g. similar quality of service requirements.

However, even if a multiplexing solution was implemented, a user equipment must activate multiple PDP contexts e.g. if the quality of service requirements of the media components of an application session are different. For example, an IP multimedia session consisting of video, voice and data would most likely require three distinct qualities of service levels, which in turn requires three PDP contexts.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved technique in which one or more of the above-stated problems are addressed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the present invention there is provided a method of establishing multiple connections between a user equipment and a communications network over a radio interface, comprising
5 the step of establishing the radio access resources for the multiple connections in a single step.

The multiple connections may correspond to bearers having different levels of service. The multiple connections may correspond to bearers carrying different media components. The
10 media components may include one or more of video, voice or data. The radio access resources may be radio access bearers.

The method may further comprise receiving a request for the multiple connections. The request is at least one PDP context request. The method may further comprise receiving a request
15 for the multiple connections in a single step.

The request may be one of: an activate PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts; an activate secondary PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts; a modify PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts; a deactivate
20 PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts.

A create PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts may be created responsive to the request. A create PDP context response identifying multiple PDP contexts may be created responsive to the create PDP context request. The radio access
25 resources may be established responsive to the create PDP context response. An activate PDP context accept identifying multiple PDP contexts may be created following establishment of the radio access resources.

The method may further comprise receiving requests for the
30 multiple connections in corresponding multiple successive

steps. Each request may be an activate PDP context request identifying a PDP context.

Each request may be one of: an activate secondary PDP context request identifying a PDP context; a modify PDP context request
5 identifying a PDP context; a deactivate PDP context request identifying a PDP context.

The activate request may include an indication of whether a further request follows. The further request may be the corresponding one of: an activate secondary PDP context request
10 identifying a PDP context; a modify PDP context request identifying a PDP context; a deactivate PDP context request identifying a PDP context. A create PDP context request may be created responsive to each successive request. The create PDP context request may include an indication of whether a further
15 PDP context request follows. The further request may be one of: an activate secondary PDP context request identifying a PDP context; a modify PDP context request identifying a PDP context; a deactivate PDP context request identifying a PDP context. A create PDP context response may be created
20 responsive to each successive create PDP context request. The create PDP context response may include an indication of whether a further PDP context response follows. The further response may be one of: an activate secondary PDP context request identifying a PDP context; a modify PDP context request
25 identifying a PDP context; a deactivate PDP context request identifying a PDP context. The radio access resources may be established responsive to receipt of all successive PDP context responses. Successive activate PDP context accepts may be created following establishment of the radio access resources.

30 In a further aspect the present invention provides a method of establishing multiple PDP contexts in a mobile communication system. The method comprises determining the number of PDP

context requests required. Preferably this step is performed by the UE. The method comprises receiving all the required PDP context requests. This step is preferably performed in the network, i.e. in the SGSN and/or the GGSN. The method comprises
5 establishing radio access resources for all the PDP context requests. This step is preferably initiated by the SGSN, and the RNC then preferably allocates the radio access resources based on SGSN requests.

10 In accordance with further aspects of the invention there is provided means adapted to perform the method steps defined herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention and as to how the same can be carried into effect, reference will now be
15 made by way of example to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 illustrates an exemplary network scenario within which embodiments of the present invention may be implemented;

Figure 2 illustrates the method steps in a first embodiment of the present invention;

20 Figure 3 illustrates the signaling between network elements in a first embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 illustrates the method steps in a second embodiment of the present invention; and

25 Figure 5 illustrates the signaling between network elements in a second embodiment of the present invention

Description of Preferred Embodiments

The present invention is described herein with reference to a particular illustrative embodiment. However, such embodiment is presented for the purposes of illustrating the present
30 invention, and does not limit the scope thereof.

The present invention is described herein by way of reference to an example implementation in a 3G UMTS (universal mobile telecommunication system) network. One skilled in the art will appreciate, however, from reading the following description
5 that the present invention is not limited in its broad applicability to such an implementation.

Referring to Figure 1, there is illustrated the main elements of a UMTS network, necessary for understanding embodiments of the present invention. It should be noted that Figure 1 does
10 not represent a full implementation of a UMTS network, which implementation will be familiar to one skilled in the art. Rather Figure 1 represents some of the main elements of such a UMTS network necessary for placing the present invention into an appropriate context.

15 A user equipment (UE) 100 communicates over a radio interface with a UTRAN (UMTS radio access network) 102. As is known in the art, the UTRAN 102 includes a base transceiver station (BTS) 104 and a radio network controller (RNC) 106. In the UMTS network the UTRAN 102 is connected to a serving GPRS
20 support node (SGSN) 108, which in turn is connected to a gateway GPRS support node (GGSN) 110. The GGSN 110 is further connected to at least one external network, e.g. multimedia IP network, represented by reference numeral 112 in Figure 1. Both the SGSN and the GGSN may be considered to be network elements.

25 In general terms, a PDP context is activated in order to establish a logical connection between a user equipment and the GGSN.

In known implementations, the UE 100 initiates a logical connection by requesting a PDP context activation by
30 transmitting session management messages to the SGSN 108 via the UTRAN 102. Responsive thereto, the SGSN 108 requests RAB

(radio access bearer) establishment from the RNC 106 using the radio access network application protocol (RANAP). The SGSN 108 also requests PDP context creation with GPRS tunneling protocol (GTP) from the GGSN 110. This procedure is repeated
5 for each PDP context which the UE 100 requires.

As well as requesting PDP context activation, the UE 100 may also request secondary PDP context activations, PDP context modifications, or PDP context deactivations. The specific implementation of PDP context activations, secondary PDP
10 context activations, PDP context modifications, and PDP context deactivations is well known in the art.

A first embodiment of the present invention is now described with reference to Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 illustrates a flowchart for the procedures followed in the exemplary
15 embodiment, and Figure 3 illustrates the signaling flow in the exemplary embodiment.

In accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention, the activation (or modification) of multiple PDP contexts is provided for by a single session management message and a single GTP message. In this way, the UE 100 indicates
20 all required PDP contexts at the same time to the SGSN 108. The SGSN 108 can also request creation of all required PDP contexts at the same time from the GGSN 110. Advantageously, the SGSN 108 does not have to perform multiple RAB
25 establishment procedures corresponding to multiple PDP context activations, which saves time when activating the required PDP context.

Referring to Figure 3, as represented by signal 300 the UE 100 transmits an activate PDP context request to the SGSN 108,
30 through the UTRAN 102. In accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention, the activate PDP context request

includes multiple PDP context requests. As represented by step 200 in Figure 2, the SGSN receives the activate PDP context request with multiple PDP contexts.

In this embodiment, the activate PDP context request session management message comprises e.g. the following parameters for the PDP context:

- NSAPI
- TI
- PDP Type
- 10 • PDP Address
- Access Point Name
- QoS Requested
- PDP Configuration Options

TFT may also be included when, for example, a secondary PDP context is activated or when a PDP context is modified. TFT is not included, however, in the activate PDP context request message which is used to activate a primary PDP context.

All these parameters are known in a standard activate PDP context request session management message. In addition, the message is adapted to further include parameters for each required additional PDP context, e.g.:

- NSAPI 2
- TI 2
- QoS Requested 2
- 25 • PDP Configuration Options 2
- TFT 2
- NSAPI 3
- TI 3
- QoS Requested 3
- 30 • PDP Configuration Options 3

- TFT 3

Thus, in this embodiment, the activate PDP context request contains the details of three PDP contexts requested by the UE 100, being all the PDP contexts desired by the UE 100. In other
5 embodiments the activate PDP context request may, in accordance with this embodiment of the present invention, generally identify two or more PDP contexts.

Responsive to the activate PDP context request, as represented by step 202 the SGSN 108 transmits a create PDP context request
10 GTP message 302 to the GGSN 110. The create PDP context request contains, in accordance with the embodiment of the invention, the identity of multiple PDP contexts. In accordance with known procedures, the create PDP context request message 302 includes e.g. the following parameters for the PDP context:

- 15 • NSAPI
- PDP Type
- PDP Address
- Access Point Name
- QoS Profile
- 20 • PDP Configuration Options
- SGSN Address Data
- SGSN Address Signaling
- TEID Data
- TEID Signaling
- 25 • MSISDN
- Charging Characteristics

Not all PDP context parameters are listed. The full list of PDP context parameters can be found from 3GPP specifications, and the list may even be different e.g. in 3GPP Rel5 than in 3GPP

Rel4, because new parameters may be added in later releases. The above parameters are included as examples only.

In addition, in accordance with this embodiment of the invention the create PDP context request also includes e.g. the
5 following parameters:

- NSAPI2
- QoS Profile 2
- PDP Configuration Options 2
- SGSN Address Data 2
- 10 • SGSN Address Signaling 2
- TEID Data 2
- TEID Signaling 2
- Charging Characteristics 2
- TFT 2
- 15 • NSAPI 3
- QoS Profile 3
- PDP Configuration Options 3
- SGSN Address Data 3
- SGSN Address Signaling 3
- 20 • TEID Data 3
- TEID Signaling 3
- Charging Characteristics 3
- TFT 3

Thus the GGSN 110 similarly receives the details of all three
25 of the PDP contexts requested in a single message.

Responsive to the create PDP context request message 302, the GGSN 110 sends a create PDP context response message 304 to the SGSN 108. As is known, this message includes e.g.:

- PDP Address

- QoS Profile
- PDP Configuration Options
- GGSN Address Data
- GGSN Address Signalling
- 5 • TEID Data
- TEID Signaling
- Charging ID
- Cause

10 In addition, in accordance with this embodiment of the invention the create PDP context response message 304 also includes e.g.:

- QoS Profile 2
- PDP Configuration Options 2
- GGSN Address Data 2
- 15 • GGSN Address Signaling 2
- TEID Data 2
- TEID Signaling 2
- Charging ID 2
- Cause 2
- 20 • QoS Profile 3
- PDP Configuration Options 3
- GGSN Address Data 3
- GGSN Address Signaling 3
- TEID Data 3
- 25 • TEID Signaling 3
- Charging ID 3
- Cause 3

The receipt of the create PDP context response message 304 by the SGSN 108 is represented in Figure 2 by step 204.

In a step 206, the SGSN 108 requests RAB establishment with a message 306 to the RNC 106. The request message 306 includes information identifying all required RABs. Responsive thereto, the SGSN 108 receives from the RNC 106 a response message 308,
5 as denoted by step 208, providing information on all required RABs.

Thus, RAB establishment for all PDP contexts takes place in a single step.

Thereafter, the SGSN 108 transmits an activate PDP context
10 accept message 310 to the UE 100, as represented by step 210. As is known, the activate PDP context accept message 310 includes e.g.:

- TI
- PDP Type
- 15 • PDP Address
- QoS Profile
- Radio Priority
- Packet Flow ID
- PDP Configuration Options
- 20 • Cause

In addition, in accordance with this embodiment of the invention the activate PDP context accept further includes e.g.:

- TI 2
- 25 • QoS Profile 2
- Radio Priority 2
- Packet Flow ID 2
- PDP Configuration Options 2
- Cause 2
- 30 • TI 3

- QoS Profile 3
 - Radio Priority 3
 - Packet Flow ID 3
 - PDP Configuration Options 3
- 5 • Cause 3

Thus in the first described embodiment of the present invention, multiple PDP contexts are identified in all messages between the UE, the SGSN and the GGSN. Advantageously, therefore, at the time that the SGSN has to request RAB
10 establishment for the first PDP context, the SGSN is able to provide the RNC with a request for all RAB establishments.

As a consequence, the amount of signaling messages and thus the amount of traffic are reduced in the radio interface.

A second embodiment of the present invention is now described
15 by way of reference to the flowchart of Figure 4 and the signaling diagram of Figure 5. Referring to Figure 5, as represented by signal 502 the UE 100 sends an activate PDP context request message to the SGSN 108 in accordance with conventional techniques. The receipt of the message 502 is
20 represented in Figure 4 by step 400. In step 402 the SGSN 108 then forwards a create PDP context request message 504 to the GGSN 110, again in accordance with conventional techniques. The GGSN 110 then replies to the SGSN 108 with a create PDP context response message 506, again in accordance with
25 conventional techniques. The receipt of such message by the SGSN 108 is represented in Figure 4 by step 404.

In accordance with the second embodiment of the present invention, the activate PDP context request message 502 is adapted to include a flag to indicate whether any further PDP
30 context requests are required by the UE 100. In a step 406, the SGSN 108 determines whether further PDP context requests

are expected, based on the setting of the appropriate flag in the previous activate PDP context request.

In the present case, it is assumed that the UE 100 wishes to establish two PDP context requests. In step 406 therefore the
5 SGSN returns to step 400, and receives a further activate PDP context request message 508. As before, the SGSN 108 sends a create PDP context request message 510 to the GGSN 110, which replies with a create PDP context response message 512 to the SGSN 108.

10 On this occasion, in step 406, the SGSN 108 determines that there are no further PDP contexts requested, and moves on to step 408. In step 408 the SGSN 108 requests RAB establishment with the RNC 106, as represented by the request RAB establishment message 514. Thereafter, in a step 410, the SGSN
15 108 receives information on all required RABs in a step 410, as represented by the reply RAB information message 516.

After RAB establishment, in a step 412 the SGSN 108 transmits activate PDP context accept messages to the UE 100. An accept message is transmitted for each original PDP context request
20 message received from the UE 100. In a step 412 the SGSN transmits the activate PDP context accept message 518. In a step 414 the SGSN 108 determines whether further PDP context have been established. Step 412 is then repeated and a further activate PDP context accept message 520 is transmitted to the
25 UE 100. Thereafter, all PDP contexts are established.

Thus the second embodiment of the present invention, described hereinabove with reference to Figures 4 and 5, utilizes existing session management procedures between the UE 100 and the SGSN 108, and existing GTP procedures between the SGSN 108
30 and the GGSN 110. Such existing procedures include PDP context activation, secondary PDP context activation, PDP context

modification, and PDP context deactivation. Using the techniques of the second embodiment, the existing procedures are modified merely to add a flag to the existing session management message transmitted from the UE 100 to the SGSN 108.

5 This flag is a "more PDP context requests" flag, which indicates to the SGSN that it should wait before initiating RAB establishment. In the preferred embodiment, the SGSN thus waits until it receives an activate PDP context request from the UE 100 which does not have the flag set, indicating that no
10 further requests are expected. All RABs are then established in a single procedure.

As well as adapting the session management message from the UE 100 to the SGSN 108, the second embodiment of the present invention requires the logic of the SGSN 108 to be adapted.

15 Otherwise, existing session management and GTP messages are used. With the adapted logic, the SGSN 108 does not initiate RAB establishment immediately when receiving a session management request (i.e. an activate PDP context request), but waits until all requests are received based on the flag
20 indication.

In this way, the SGSN does not initiate multiple RAB establishment procedures towards the RNC, but rather initiates a single RAB establishment procedure. This saves time which would normally be used to activate or modify several PDP
25 contexts.

In general, both described embodiments of the invention provide a technique in which, for the establishment of multiple logical connections between a user equipment and a network over a radio interface, the radio access resources are established in a
30 single step.

Although the present invention has been specifically described in relation to a 3G mobile communications network, a person skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention is not so limited in its general applicability.

5 Specifically, the present invention is not limited in its applicability to logical connections on the basis of PDP contexts. Nor is the present invention limited to networks using a SGSN or a GGSN for establishing logical connections.

10 The present invention is applicable for circuit switched and packet switched applications, including GPRS.

The present invention is described herein with reference to examples of preferred embodiments for the purpose of illustration, and is not limited to any such embodiments. The scope of the present invention is defined by the appended
15 claims.

CLAIMS

1. A method of establishing multiple connections between a user equipment and a communications network over a radio interface, comprising the step of establishing the radio access
5 resources for the multiple connections in a single step.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the multiple connections correspond to bearers having different levels of service.
3. A method according to claim 1 wherein the multiple
10 connections correspond to bearers carrying different media components.
4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the media components include one or more of video, voice or data.
5. A method according to claim 1 wherein the radio access
15 resources are radio access bearers.
6. A method according to claim 1 further comprising receiving a request for the multiple connections.
7. A method according to claim 6 wherein the request is at least one PDP context request.
- 20 8. A method according to claim 1 further comprising receiving a request for the multiple connections in a single step.
9. A method according to claim 8 wherein the request is an activate PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts.
10. A method according to claim 8 wherein the request is an
25 activate secondary PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts.
11. A method according to claim 8 wherein the request is a modify PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts.

12. A method according to claim 8 wherein the request is a deactivate PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts.

13. A method according to claim 8 wherein a create PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts is created responsive to the request.

14. A method according to claim 13 wherein a create PDP context response identifying multiple PDP contexts is created responsive to the create PDP context request.

15. A method according to claim 14 wherein the radio access resources are established responsive to the create PDP context response.

16. A method according to claim 15 wherein an activate PDP context accept identifying multiple PDP contexts is created following establishment of the radio access resources.

17. A method according to claim 1 further comprising receiving requests for the multiple connections in corresponding multiple successive steps.

18. A method according to claim 17 wherein each request is an activate PDP context request identifying a PDP context.

19. A method according to claim 17 wherein each request is an activate secondary PDP context request identifying a PDP context.

20. A method according to claim 17 wherein each request is a modify PDP context request identifying a PDP context.

21. A method according to claim 17 wherein each request is a deactivate PDP context request identifying a PDP context.

22. A method according to claim 17 wherein the activate request includes an indication of whether a further request follows.

23. A method according to claim 17 wherein a create PDP context request is created responsive to each successive request.

24. A method according to claim 23 wherein the create PDP context request includes an indication of whether a further PDP context request follows.

25. A method according to claim 23 wherein a create PDP context response is created responsive to each successive create PDP context request.

26. A method according to claim 25 wherein the create PDP context response includes an indication of whether a further PDP context response follows.

27. A method according to claim 26 wherein the radio access resources are established responsive to receipt of all successive PDP context responses.

28. A method according to claim 27 wherein successive activate PDP context accepts are created following establishment of the radio access resources.

29. A method of establishing multiple PDP contexts in a mobile communication system, comprising:

determining the number of PDP context requests required;
receiving all the required PDP context requests;

establishing radio access resources for all the PDP context requests.

30. Apparatus for establishing multiple connections between a user equipment and a communications network over a radio interface, comprising means adapted to establish the radio access resources for the multiple connections in a single step.

31. Apparatus according to claim 30 in which the multiple connections correspond to bearers having different levels of service.

32. Apparatus according to claim 30 in which the multiple
5 connections correspond to bearers carrying different media components.

33. Apparatus according to claim 32 wherein the media components include one or more of video, voice or data.

34. Apparatus according to claim 30 wherein the radio access
10 resources are radio access bearers.

35. Apparatus according to claim 30 further comprising means for receiving a request for the multiple connections.

36. Apparatus according to claim 35 wherein the request is at least one PDP context request.

15 37. Apparatus according to claim 30 further comprising means for receiving a request for the multiple connections in a single step.

38. Apparatus according to claim 37 wherein the request is an activate PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts.

20 39. Apparatus according to claim 37 wherein the request is one of:

an activate secondary PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts;

a modify PDP context request identifying multiple PDP
25 contexts;

a deactivate PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts.

40. Apparatus according to claim 37 further comprising means for generating a create PDP context request identifying multiple PDP contexts responsive to the request.

41. Apparatus according to claim 40 further comprising means
5 for generating a create PDP context response identifying multiple PDP contexts responsive to the create PDP context request.

42. Apparatus according to claim 41 further comprising means
10 for establishing the radio access resources responsive to the create PDP context response.

43. Apparatus according to claim 42 further comprising creating an activate PDP context accept identifying multiple PDP contexts following establishment of the radio access resources.

15 44. Apparatus according to claim 30 further comprising means for receiving requests for the multiple connections in corresponding multiple successive steps.

45. Apparatus according to claim 44 wherein each request is one of:

20 an activate PDP context request identifying a PDP context;
an activate secondary PDP context request identifying a PDP context;

a modify PDP context request identifying a PDP context;

a deactivate PDP context request identifying a PDP
25 context.

46. Apparatus according to claim 44 wherein the activate request includes an indication of whether a further request follows.

47. Apparatus according to claim 44 further comprising means for creating a create PDP context request responsive to each successive request.

5 48. Apparatus according to claim 47 wherein the create PDP context request includes an indication of whether a further PDP context request follows.

49. Apparatus according to claim 47 further comprising means for creating a create PDP context response responsive to each successive create PDP context request.

10 50. Apparatus according to claim 49 wherein the create PDP context response includes an indication of whether a further PDP context response follows.

51. Apparatus according to claim 50 further comprising means for establishing the radio access resources responsive to
15 receipt of all successive PDP context responses.

52. Apparatus according to claim 51 further comprising means for establishing successive activate PDP context accepts following establishment of the radio access resources.

53. A mobile communication system for establishing multiple
20 PDP contexts comprising:

at least one user equipment for determining the number of PDP context requests required;

in a first network element receiving all the required PDP context requests;

25 in a second network element establishing radio access resources for all the PDP context requests; and

in a third network element allocating radio access resources based on the requests to the second element.

54. A mobile communication system according to claim 53 wherein the first network element is a SGSN or a GGSN; wherein the second network element is the SGSN; and the third network element is an RNC.

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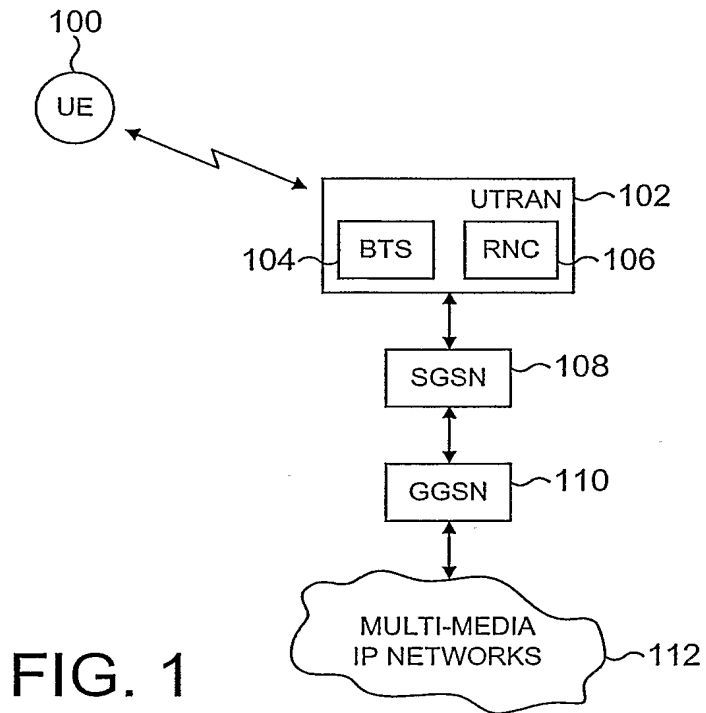


FIG. 1

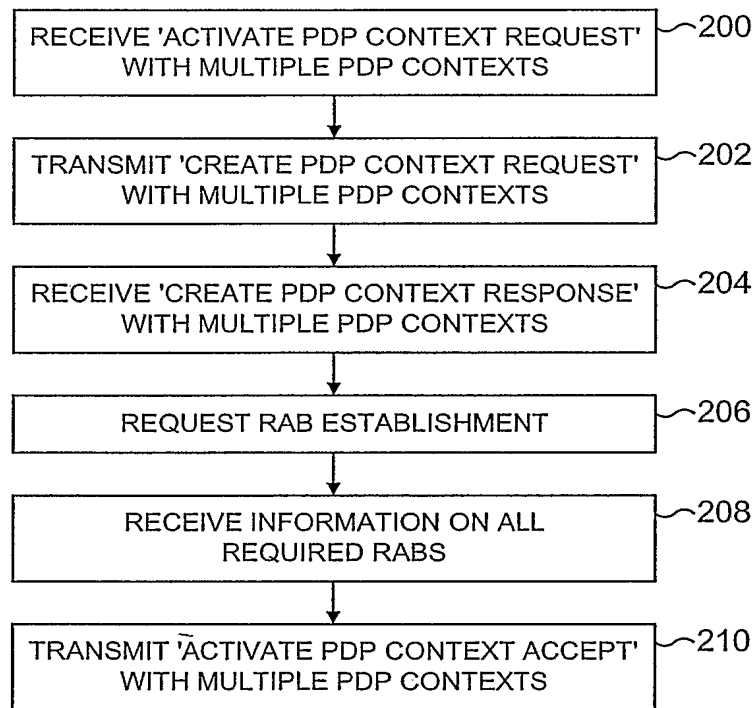


FIG. 2

2 / 3

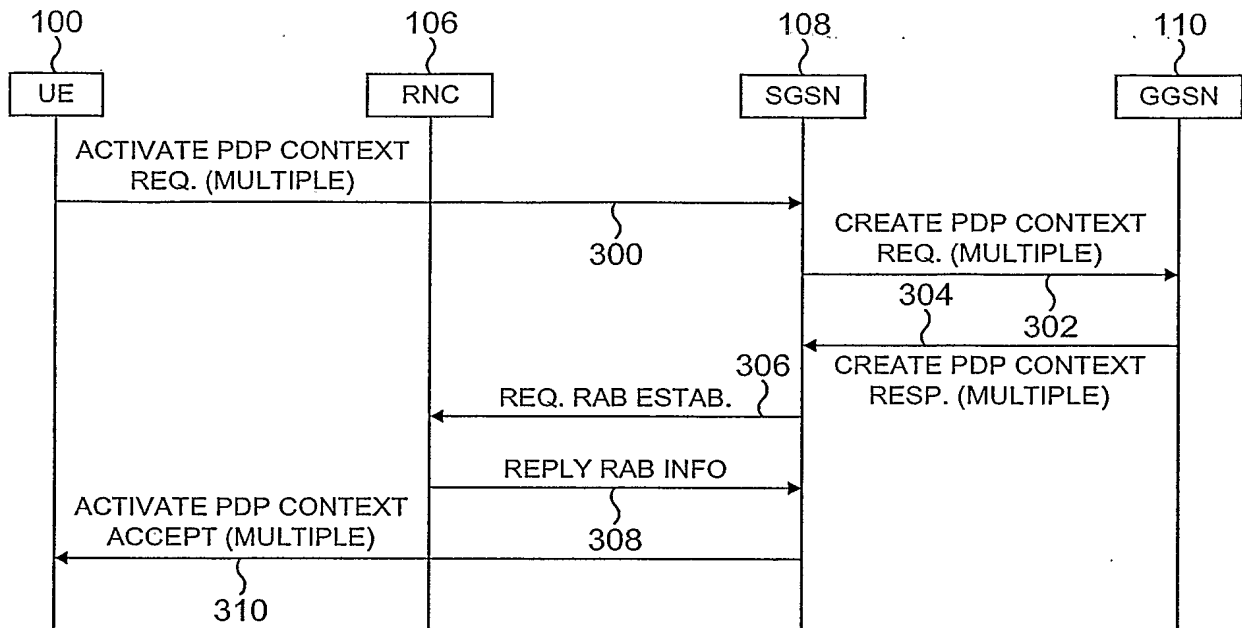


FIG. 3

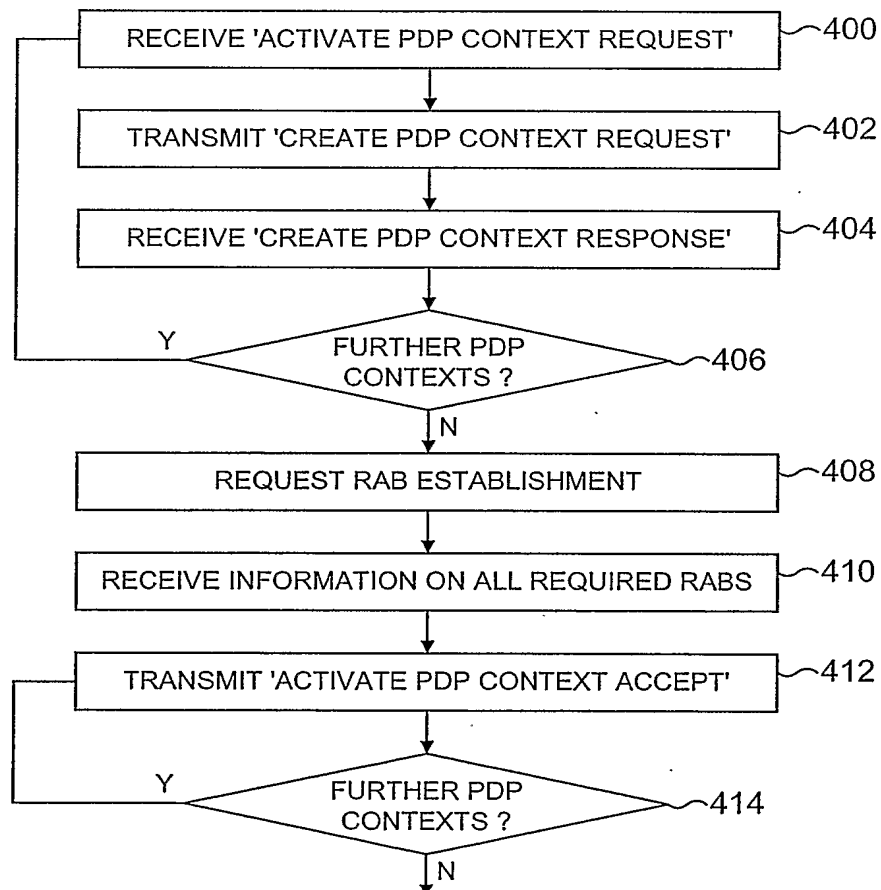


FIG. 4

3 / 3

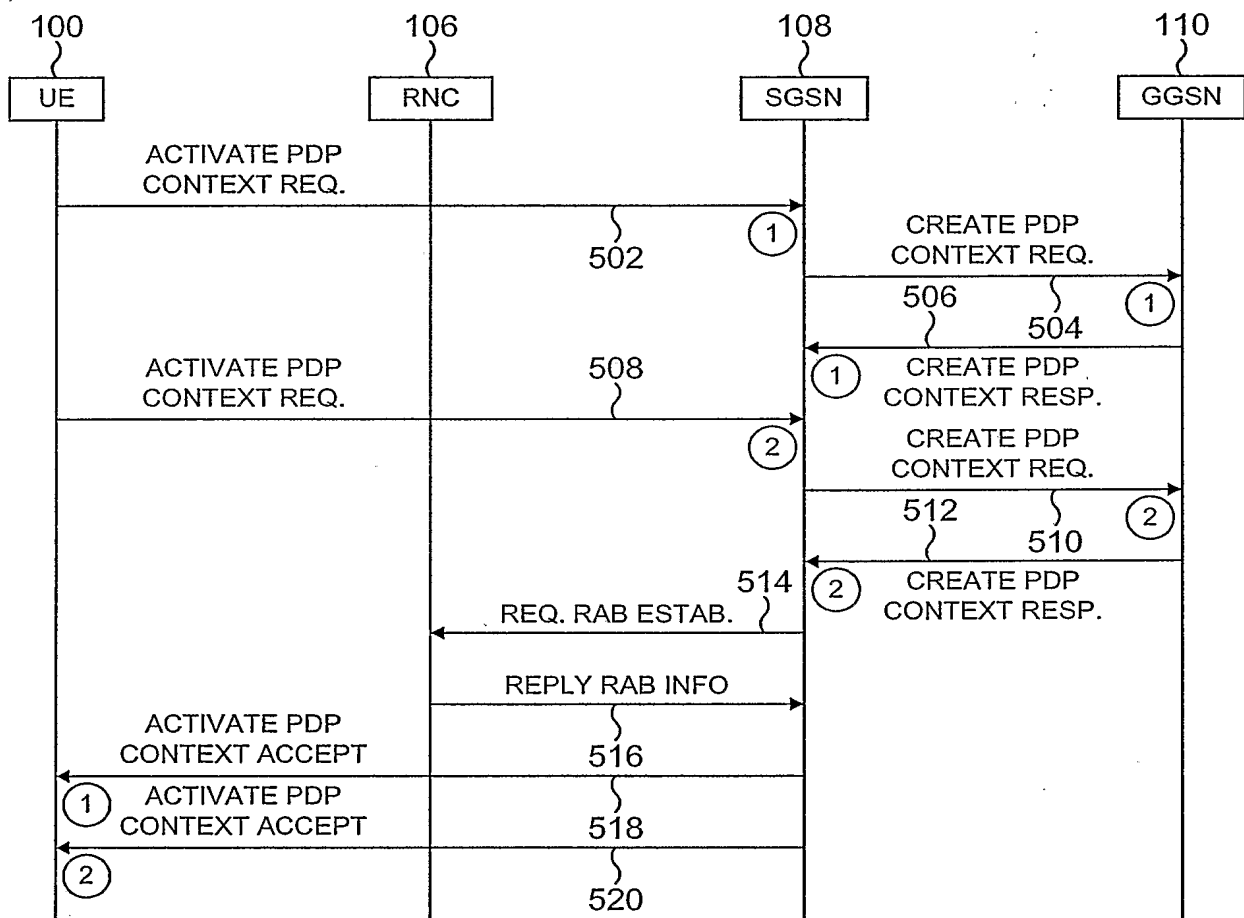


FIG. 5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

PCT/IB 03/06104

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 H04Q7/22 H04L12/56

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 H04Q H04L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, INSPEC

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 1 096 742 A (LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES INC) 2 May 2001 (2001-05-02)	1-16, 29-43, 53, 54
Y	abstract paragraph '0001! - paragraph '0028! figure 1	17-28, 44-52
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☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

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